

- “made known” (on the part of God).

God chose to reveal this mystery through inspiration (Ephesians 3:5).

What is inspiration? Inspiration is the breathing out of God through a finite mind. Peter defined it as, “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). Amos wrote “Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Paul and others “by the Spirit” were able to “decipher” the mystery hidden in the ages. No man could know such knowledge without revelation, and such revelation came about through inspiration (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13). Thankfully God spoke (Jeremiah 1:9; 2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Timothy 3:16).

It is through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the writers of the New Testament could spread forth the message of the mystery to those not inspired (Ephesians 3:3-4). Since God did not speak to everyone through inspiration, men who were not inspired were spoken to God by the product of inspiration: “words” (Ephesians 3:3). These words would have been produced through preaching (Ephesians 6:19) and writing (Ephesians 3:4). This revelation through inspiration is understandable[6] (Ephesians 3:5; 1 Corinthians 2:13). The inspired message allows everyone to read so that they may understand this mystery. Despite the dogmatic view of Calvinistic theology, the Word is all sufficient (2 Peter 1:3). Some think that even the Word is still mysterious itself and one must be illuminated by the Holy Spirit to understand, but Paul said “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand.” Through revelation God manifested this mystery so that everyone who reads can solve the case. God did not leave His people with any loose ends or unopened answers in regards this important mystery.

Now...since God has revealed the mystery to us...let us see what it is.

### **Mysteries Are Solved (Ephesians 3:6, 8, 10-11).**

Every crime TV show, movie, or book will only end well if the mystery is solved. No one likes a cliffhanger

—unless they will find the answer in a future episode, movie, or chapter. Ultimately, God’s mystery was solved by God alone. It was not going to be hidden forever.

The mystery in summary, is the Gospel plan of salvation. Since Paul’s main purpose in Ephesians is show the beauty of the church and the plan of it, such is clearly made evident. The plan that was foreordained from the foundation of the world (Ephesians 3:11; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:18-19) is what Paul had in mind when he wrote to these saints. Specifically, in chapter 3, the mystery concerns the Gentiles entrance into the church (Acts 11:15-18; Ephesians 2:12-22). This was a promise lingering for years and was revealed as the church was established. This mystery revealed that the Gentiles could be heirs with the Jews, unified with the Jews, and seeds of Abraham. They could receive the blessings of sonship (cf. Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 4:1-7). This mystery broke the wall and unified people of all races, nations, sects, and genders (Acts 15:9; Galatians 3:28).

Eureka! God’s wondrous plan of salvation has been found and revealed.

There are many things that remain a mystery to us today, even in Scripture (Deuteronomy 29:29), but salvation is not one of them. Ignorance of the mystery can be put away through search and instruction (Acts 8:30-35). Because of God’s wondrous love, the mystery has been solved and everyone today can be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We can go to heaven because God cracked the case. Although heaven is still a mystery to us, this is a mystery we cannot wait to solve!

#### **Endnotes**

- [1]Robert R. Taylor, Studies in the Book of Revelation, Sain Publications, 2013, p. 46-47.
- [2]Homer Haily, The Book of Revelation, Nevada Publications, 2007, p. 347.
- [3]<https://gbntv.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Textual/15-Winton-Daniel.pdf>
- [4]Vine, 97.
- [5]Strong
- [6]Keith A. Mosher, Sr., The Book God “Breathed,” Sain Publications, 2008, p. 51.
- [7]Strong

# ***Mystery***



**Noah Olson**



Some present day mysteries are:

- “The Bermuda Triangle.”
- Who murdered John F. Kennedy?
- What happened to the Ark of the Covenant?
- Did the Queen of England have Princess Diana killed?
- Area 51.

Mysteries give people an urge for curiosity.

Did you know that God is a mystery-writer? God is an author of many genres (history, poetry, law, and prophesy) and included in each of them is mystery. The mysteries God wrote even intrigue the angels in heaven (1 Peter 1:10-12). Since mysteries are intriguing, this one should intrigue us the more because it has to do with salvation.

Ephesians has been given the title the “church of Christ.” Agreeably, in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul wrote about salvation and the church. The first three chapters discuss the theological part of it, while the last three chapters focus on practicality. In chapter three, Paul wrote about God’s mystery (Ephesians 3:1-11).

What is a mystery? Merriam Webster defined it as: (1) “something not understood or beyond understanding.” The third definition is closer to the Scriptural one: “a religious truth that one can know only by revelation and cannot fully understand. The Greek word is *mustērion* is found 27 times in the New Testament. Not every time when the word is used does it reference the same thing. It is used to refer to:

- Hardening of the Jews (Romans 11:25).
- The change of the body (1 Corinthians 15:51).
- The man of sin (2 Thessalonians 2:7).
- The seven stars (messengers[1]) (Revelation 1:20).
- A name[2] (Revelation 17:5).
- Knowledge about the woman in Revelation (Revelation 17:7).

To what is Paul referring in Ephesians 3? What does mystery demand? Let us explore God’s mystery that has been solved!

### **Mysteries Are Hidden (Ephesians 3:9).**

A mystery means something that is hidden and not

known. Many mysteries are often hidden behind secret doors, with certain codes, and often surround criminals. The mystery that Paul discusses was hidden by God (Ephesians 3:9). His eternal plan was already set (Ephesians 3:11). He kept it hidden only to be revealed at the appropriate time. God concocted the plan, kept it a mystery, and new exactly how everything would play out.

Many were ignorant of this mystery (Romans 16:25; Colossians 1:26). The phrases “hath been hid” and “kept secret” mean to conceal and keep in silence. No one could break into God’s vault, for it was sealed tight, and only He had the key. Even great men like Moses, Elijah, or Isaiah were kept from knowing the entirety of the mystery. What God kept in His vault must have been important.

Since it is hidden by God, the mystery cannot be understood by anyone unless God allows the knowledge to be known.

### **Mysteries Usually Involve Hints (Ephesians 3:5).**

Clues aid investigators in their search to uncover certain mysteries. Sherlock Holmes paid special attention to details hoping to find hints in the cases he solved. Paul said that this mystery was not fully known in “other ages,” a reference to Old Testament times. Since it was not the fulness of times yet (Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:10), God did not reveal the answer. While it was not fully known, God gave hints along the way (Romans 16:25-26).

The prophets could not fully comprehend what they wrote (1 Peter 1:10-12). Although they searched diligently, they were not given full knowledge of the futural plan. Imagine writing something and not understanding what it is. God revealed to them what they needed to know and that is it. The angel told Daniel “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased” (Daniel 12:4) and then recorded that he had heard, but he didn’t understand (Daniel 12:8). Winton said, “the full meaning of the prophecy could not be known until

it came to its fulfillment.”[3] Because it was not revealed to them, they could not know the mystery, even with hints.

God revealed His will little by little, like a curtain that is pulled back inch by inch. It has often been said that the Patriarchal Age is the Starlight Age, the Mosaic Age is the Moonlight Age, and the Christian Age the Sunlight Age. Despite the hints no man could fully understand what this mystery was until God revealed it to him.

### **Mysteries Must Be Revealed (Ephesians 3:3-5).**

Many crime solvers and detectives use a lot of different means to reveal the mystery that they are seeking. Many today can use similar techniques to solve cases. Today we are able to find motives for murder and sometimes the futural target of terrorists. While these things are knowable, God’s mystery could never have been solved by human intervention. Careful attention to details, sharp memory, the scientific method, or personal abilities could not crack this case. No man could look at a tree or study the planets and come to know that:

- The church of Christ is the only true church of the New Testament.
- The plan of salvation.
- Gentiles entrance into the Kingdom.

While General Revelation gives us the evidence for a Creator, it is Special Revelation that gives us the evidence that it is Yahweh. God’s mystery is not so easily solved, but it can be through a specific, divine mode.

Merriam Webster said that a mystery is “religious truth that one can know only by revelation and cannot fully understand” and Vine concluded that a mystery, “can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those only who are illuminated by His Spirit.”[4] Therefore, God’s speaking allowed man to be able to know the mystery. Note Paul’s use of some words in Ephesians 3:

- “revelation” (*apokaluphsin*-to lay bare).
- “revealed” (*apokolupto*-to take off the cover [5])